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AMERICAN CUTLERY.

How It is Making Headway Against the Foreign Product.

The cutlery trade of America is one of very generous proportions. By cutlery it is meant to include more particularly what is known to the trade as cutlery, not including tools and machinery. The ground intended to be covered would include more particularly scissors, shears, knives—both pocket and butchers—and what is known as table cutlery. Formerly, the term cutlery included sword blades and bayonets, but the use of such articles appears to the people of this country only in the dim distance, and the celebrity of the Damascus sword blade is not worshipped in this country. In the year 1880 there were imported into this country "cutlery and knives"—using the terms of the treasury report—to the value of \$1,123,500, on which a duty, at 50 per cent ad valorem, was paid of \$561,000, making the total value of the imported goods about \$1,785,000. Now, by doubling this sum, something like the total value of the cutlery trade of this country per annum will be obtained, since it is pretty generally understood among the dealers in cutlery proper—that is, scissors, shears, razors, knives (hand, pocket, butchers and table)—not including tools, that about one half the goods they sell are of American make.

But it should also be added here that the American goods are fast superseding the foreign make, being cheaper and generally more beautiful in shape and polish. It is also beginning to be admitted by the former sticklers from imported cutlery that the cutting qualities of well made American goods have been wonderfully improved within the past twenty years, and that they are hardly excelled by anything from abroad. In scissors and shears

nearly three-fifths of the goods sold are of American make. The American makers have far outstripped the foreign workmen in forming and casting the bows of hand-fingers and thumb—parts of all the larger shears in use. The old idea was that of forging out from wrought iron, or steel, these bows, but American workmen have made a long step toward both cheapness and beauty of form by casting these from a malleable iron, to which the cutting steel blades are afterward joined. This idea has given American manufacturers a strong hold upon the shears trade, although a large proportion of the small scissors are still made abroad.

In table cutlery nearly four-fifths of the goods sold are of American make, and the same thing is also true of butchers' and shears knives. American table cutlery is sold at a lower figure, and is generally of better shape and style than that of foreign make, especially since the introduction of silver-plating or coating steel table knives with silver. Razors are yet very largely made abroad. The staid, old-style gentleman, who still persists in the "barber's" practice of shaving his face, is also slow to be convinced that any other tool can do the work smoothly as a Swedish razor. In pocket cutlery, according to the best estimates of dealers, about four-fifths of the goods sold in this country are of foreign manufacture. In this direction

AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS do not seem to have gone ahead with as much rapidity. The difficulties they have had to encounter, and those of exceedingly cheap labor on the other side of the ocean, and some remarkably strong names and trademarks attached to goods of foreign make, but, even in pocket cutlery, the gain is largely in favor of American goods.

In surgical instruments and implements a great many goods of foreign manufacture are still used, but, even with the surgeons, American instruments are gaining in favor. A great many surgical instruments are made by German workmen in America, and nearly all of them are hand-forged, since the number used is not sufficiently large to warrant the outlay of special machinery and "teams" of workmen. Some of the finest jobs of cutlery work are done by these German workmen, and it is here that wonderful improvements and curious devices have been brought out. The surgeon's "kit" of tools of forty years ago would be as ridiculous as the clothes he then wore, and they would not be fit for the use of an enterprising butcher of the present day. In the direction of dental surgery and operating instruments, very great improvements have taken place during half a century, and the skilled cutlery and instrument maker has been called upon to make all of the tools that have been perfected forward from the old tent look, with which teeth were formerly pried from the jaws, very much to the discomfort of the patient, to the ingenious outfit of the dentist of the present day, with a pair of pliers suited to every form of tooth.

DENTAL INSTRUMENTS.

The manufacture of dental instruments may be considered as a branch of the cutlery trade, and one in which skilled workmen in America have succeeded wonderfully. The temper for very much to do with the value of their instruments, is indeed, it does with cutlery and tools of all kinds. But it requires a skilled workman to forge two pieces of steel into the progs of a pair of dental forceps, put one prong through the other, making a joint almost imperceptible when the instrument is closed, and then give it a temper calling out the highest powers of the steel. The cutting and excavating implements of the dentist also require a peculiar temper. They must cut the hardest enamel of the teeth, and yet not be so brittle as to snap like the ordinary hardened steel. All this American workmen have achieved.

There is one thing concerning which New England has good reason to be proud, and that is that the great majority of all the American cutlery used in the United States is made within her borders. Massachusetts has several large cutlery manufacturers, as also has Connecticut, with smaller concerns in the New England states. It is probable that not less than \$1,000,000 worth of cutlery is annually produced in New England, and in these states are located about all of the larger concerns. There are one or two good-sized cutlery manufacturers in Pennsylvania, but the other states do comparatively little.

The manufacturers of cutlery

ARE BOUND TOGETHER

In what is known as the American Cutlery association, including nearly all of the larger concerns, and the prices of the goods are very thoroughly controlled. At the last annual meeting of the association, held at Pittsburgh, Pa., with closed doors, it is understood that the prices of table cutlery were advanced about 10 per cent, and some other goods in a small way. This association holds the trade which takes the goods of them very strictly to prices. Then, over and above these fixed prices, the profits made on American cutlery, from the manufacturer to the buyer for use, amount to from 50 to 100 per cent.

It may appear strange that even a small profit should be made on so cheap an article as an ordinary pocket-knife or a pair of scissors, much less a profit of 100 per cent, and were only a few of such articles made at a time or the work all done by one or two workmen, it would indeed be impossible. Such goods are all made by the quantity, and skilled workmen do each part. On pocketknives, for instance, one man stamps out the blades on dies and under steady hammers fitted for the purpose, and as accurate as the machinery and so expert do the workmen become that thousands of blades are forged in a day. Then another workman drills the holes, another tempers them, and so on, each workman doing only a very small part of making a table or pocket-knife, but each part being done with such skill and expedition that the actual cost on each article is reduced to a very low figure. At the end of each day the pieces or dozens of small cutlery turned out from a large factory are very numerous, and it will be seen that the cost of labor expended on each article or dozen has been reduced to

A VERY LOW FIGURE above the first cost of the raw materials from the steel, with wood, horn, ivory or shell for the handles. Ivory or shell-handled table cutlery is much more costly than that with rubber, horn or iron handles, since the cost of the ivory must be taken into the account. By the use of table knives the best ivory handles add some \$3 or \$5 the dozen. Pearl handles are still more costly. These pearl handles are all sawn from large-sized pearl oyster or clam shells, perhaps a single shell making only one-half of a knife handle, possibly a whole one. The thin bits of ivory or pearl sawn off from table cutlery handles go to make the handles of pocket knives, so that the material for pocket cutlery handles costs much less than that for table cutlery, on account of its size and thickness. Celluloid, although a new material, is being considerably used in the manufacture of cutlery handles, and dealers say that it is giving good satisfaction.

The practice of silver-plating the blades of table cutlery is growing more and more in public favor. It is done in the ordinary galvanic plating process, but generally by the silver platers, after the knives are finished, and not by the manufacturers themselves. The cost of this plating knives with silver is not a very heavy one, though much depends upon the amount of silver used, since it is possible to make an outer of silver extend over many dozens of knives, but a good, serviceable coating should cost from 50 cents to \$2 a dozen on steel-handled knives. On ivory or pearl-handled knives it cost more than twice as much, from the simple fact that it will not do to dip these handles into the plating solution until they are coated with wax, or protected against a very strong chemical solution in some way. Still, all depends upon how much silver is put upon the goods, and silver-plated knives, or goods of any kind, should be purchased only of dealers who can be depended upon, since a plating of silver worth 50 cents looks just as well as a coating costing four times as much, and the purchaser is entirely at the mercy of the seller of the goods.

An Astonished Photographer.

A few days ago a lady who wanted her baby photographed entered a gallery where a portrait had just been finished. The artist, who was within. The latter received his patron in the pleasantest manner possible, chuckled the infant under the chin, and dwelt particularly upon the fact that it was the sweetest cherub he had ever seen. Then, requesting the lady to take a seat in the reception room until he prepared a plate, the photographer entered the rear compartment, and exclaimed to his assistant, "John, here's another of those baby nuisances to wrestle with! Get out the rattles and the horns. If the datted little cuss will only keep still for three seconds I will get up something like him."

The artist had forgotten to close the door communicating with the parlour where sat the mother. She had heard every word of the conversation.

The baby was placed in position, and, being a really placid and good-mannered infant, a fine negative was obtained. Holding it up for the mother to look at, the photographer said: "Now that's a beauty for you. I call that a splendid success."

"Yes, that is very good," replied the lady, "but if the datted little cuss hadn't kept so still it would not have been a splendid success, would it?"

The photographer and his assistant both laughed.

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